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THE GETTYSBURG CAMPAIGN OF 1863

JACOBS

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THE GETTYSBURG CAMPAIGN OF 1863

A PAPER READ BEFORE

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DAUPHIN
COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

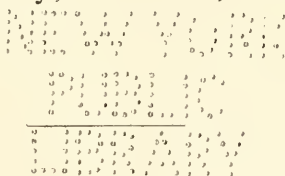
BY THE HONORABLE



MICHAEL WILLIAM JACOBS

At Its Fourty-fourth Anniversary

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Mr. President and Ladies and Gentlemen of the Historical Society of Dauphin County: "The Gettysburg campaign of 1863" in many respects stands by itself among the campaigns of the War for the Union, and it is to that campaign, its purposes, some of its main incidents and its results, rather than to a description of the great battle in which it culminated, that I shall address myself in this paper. It belongs to the history of the nation and to the history of the world, but in a particular sense it belongs to the history of Pennsylvania, and, in a still narrower and yet very definite sense, to that of Dauphin County. It is therefore very appropriate that it should be considered at the meeting of the Historical Society of Dauphin County most closely corresponding with the 50th anniversary of that great battle, and it is proper that I should dwell with some particularity upon that part of the Confederate movement which had for its object the capture of the City of Harrisburg.

Reasons for Lee's Invasion of the North.

A number of reasons for Lee's invasion of the North have been assigned by himself and others.

After Gen. Hooker's disastrous Chancellorsville campaign,—begun with brilliant strategy but ended with such weakness and indecision that an enemy, numerically much inferior but led by more enterprising and skilful generals, was enabled to take the offensive, and attack and beat back the Union army to its original position before Fredericksburg,—the various corps of that army, in addition to their losses in battle of over 17,000, were still further depleted by the expiration of the terms of service of 30,000 men. The spirit of the Army of the Potomac was depressed. The men, once they had become a well organized and disciplined army, never lost their indomitable courage and always, in the face of every danger and difficulty, and even disaster, responded gallantly to good leadership; but they had been badly handled in two great battles and had lost confidence in their leader. "Fighting Joe" was no longer a name to conjure with. Moreover, dissatisfaction was not confined to the ranks but extended among higher officers, a striking illustration being the voluntary exchange by Gen. Couch of the command of the 2nd corps for another field of usefulness.

On the other hand, every effort had been made to strengthen the Army of Northern Virginia. Its numbers had been greatly augmented by the return of Longstreet's divisions,—absent at the battle of Chancellorsville,—by reinforcements from other quarters and by filling up the ranks of many of its regiments with fresh conscripts. It was thoroughly reorganized in all its departments, newly divided into three strong corps, commanded by generals carefully selected by Lee himself, and was as carefully and thoroughly equipped as the resources of the Confederacy would permit. Moreover, the discipline and spirit of Lee's army were high. The former always had been excellent, as it must be in a seasoned army, officered by carefully selected and competent soldiers. But its spirit never was higher. No commander ever possessed the confidence of his subordinate officers and men to a higher degree than Gen. Lee and its recent victories at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville had carried the confidence of his army in its own prowess to the supremest pitch. It is a mistake to suppose,—as some appear to have suggested,—that the rank and file of the Army of Northern Virginia contemned the Army of the Potomac. They had faced each other too often in deadly conflict for the former to have any illusions about the constancy and courage of the latter, and in the town of Gettysburg during the battle the Confederate soldiers spoke with great respect of the Army of the Potomac. But that army, notwithstanding its superior numbers, had been unfortunate and might be so again, and the Army of Northern Virginia felt itself to be an invincible army led by an invincible commander. Taken all in all, in numerical strength, discipline, morale, organization and equipment, the Army of Northern Virginia in the early days of June, 1863, was the finest army the Southern Confederacy ever had in the field.

With such an army, in such circumstances, Gen. Lee could not remain idle in his intrenchments awaiting the uncertain movements of his adversary, nor could he hope successfully to attack the opposing army in its intrenchments on the other side of the Rappahannock. Besides, great and growing difficulty had been experienced in furnishing supplies to the army from its base at Richmond. A movement away from the Rappahannock was therefore indicated, and that to a territory in which supplies could be obtained; and where could this be but Maryland and Pennsylvania?

Again, at this time Grant was tightening his coils around Vicks-

burg, whose fall meant the control of the Mississippi River by the Federal troops and gunboats, and a practical lopping off of that part of the Confederacy west of the river. "Joe" Johnston had failed in his efforts to beat Gen. Grant, or to seriously withdraw his undivided attention from his now almost certain prey. Other points in the Confederacy were seriously menaced, and, if Maryland and Pennsylvania could be successfully invaded, and particularly if a successful battle could be fought in Pennsylvania, the well known sensitiveness of the Washington authorities as to the safety of their capital, might be relied upon to bring about the withdrawal of Federal troops from points where they were greatly needed, and in this way the plans of campaign of the Union Armies might be broken up until the season should be too far advanced for active operations.

After referring in his official report to the last mentioned consideration, Gen. Lee adds: "In addition to these advantages, it was hoped that other valuable results might be attained by military success." In several of his letters to President Davis, written during this campaign and before he crossed the Potomac, calling attention to the fact that the resources of the South,—particularly in men,—were waning and those of the North relatively increasing, he urges with great earnestness the policy of dividing the enemy by giving all possible encouragement to what he denominates "the rising peace party of the North;" and it is fair to surmise that one of the "valuable results to be attained by military success" was the expected effect of such success upon public sentiment in the North.

Probably another of these "valuable results" was an expected effect of military success on Northern soil upon the sentiment of European nations, leading perhaps to a recognition of the Southern Confederacy by Great Britain and France, and possible foreign interference with the Federal blockade of Southern ports.

It was, for the Confederacy, a momentous campaign, boldly conceived for far reaching purposes and resolutely and skilfully conducted.

Lee's Northward Movement.

On June 3rd the northward movement began by the march of two of Longstreet's divisions to Culpeper Court House, followed a few days later by Ewell's corps, Hill's corps being left for the present in the entrenchments at Fredericksburg to mislead the Union commander and to follow its comrades when Hooker's forces

had disappeared from its front. There is perhaps some evidence that Lee's original plan was to march northward on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge, passing between that range and the Bull Run Mountains and using his freshly mounted and greatly augmented cavalry as a screen to mask the movements of his infantry. If so, his plans must have been disconcerted by the cavalry battle of Brandy Station (or Fleetwood), in which the Confederate cavalry was considerably shattered, and the recently reorganized Union cavalry for the first time thoroughly demonstrated its enterprise and efficiency and its entire equality with its opponent.

As a matter of fact, however, and without going into details, Lee marched his three infantry corps into the Shenandoah Valley, using the Blue Ridge mountains and Stuart's cavalry, to the east of them, as an impenetrable screen behind which he so masked his movements that Hooker and the authorities at Washington were in complete ignorance of them, until, on June 13th, Ewell's corps burst like a thunder bolt upon Milroy's small command at Winchester, capturing a considerable part of it and scattering the remainder, a part finding a refuge at Harper's Ferry and a part at Bloody Run, now Everett, Pennsylvania.

On June 15th, the head of Lee's column, Rodes' division of Ewell's corps, crossed the Potomac at Williamsport and Jenkins' cavalry was sent thence to Hagerstown and Chambersburg to collect, horses, cattle and supplies. In the meantime, Imboden's cavalry was operating to the westward, destroying the Baltimore and Ohio railroad and the canal.

Preparations for Local Defense.

Although Lee's movements were thus carefully screened, Richmond papers had given some information, and the cavalry battle at Brandy Station on June 9th, revealed the presence of infantry as well as cavalry near Culpeper Court House, and a movement down the Shenandoah Valley was indicated. A raid was suspected, and it became apparent that some provision should be made for the protection of the Pennsylvania border. Accordingly, on June 9th two new military departments were created, that of the Monongahela, to which General Brooks was assigned, with headquarters at Pittsburg, and that of the Susquehanna, to which was assigned General Couch, with headquarters at Chambersburg, but, after a few days and during the remainder of the campaign, at Harrisburg. In his

order of June 11th assuming command, Gen. Couch, "to prevent serious raids by the enemy," called for volunteers to serve in the Departmental corps, for the defence of the Department, "during the pleasure of the President or the continuance of the war," and on the following day Gov. Curtin issued a proclamation earnestly urging citizens to respond to this call. The plan appears to have been to organize a permanent corps for local defence, the volunteers to be returned to their homes when not required for active service. But Milroy's disaster showed the imminence of still greater danger and the necessity for vigorous action. Accordingly, the President, on June 15th, the day the advance of Lee's army reached the Potomac, issued a call for 100,000 militia from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio and West Virginia to serve for six months, unless sooner discharged. This was followed on the same day by a proclamation of Gov. Curtin in which he spoke no longer of an anticipated raid, but a threatened invasion and "an army of rebels" "approaching our border." Difficulties appear to have arisen about the term of service and there were consequent delays, but men immediately began to come forward, and during the time Lee's army was north of the Potomac nearly 37,000 Pennsylvanians had enlisted for the emergency, or for three or six months, a large part of whom rendezvoused at Harrisburg. Gen. Couch in his official report says: "The militia of Pennsylvania raised to resist the invasion was composed of men from all classes and professions, and was a fine body of men." New York had at the time a number of small organized militia regiments, which aggregating over 13,000 men were sent into Maryland and Pennsylvania, mainly to Harrisburg. There was thus assembled at this point a considerable body of men, largely of the same kind of material as that composing the Army of the Potomac, but uninstructed, loosely disciplined and largely officered by inexperienced men. Hence they could not be relied upon to withstand the advance of well organized veteran troops.

The Movement Against Harrisburg.

I have said that the head of Lee's column crossed the Potomac on June 15th. Here his leading infantry division (Rodes' of Ewell's corps) remained for three days at Williamsport, resting and waiting for other commands to come up. On the 19th Rodes marched to Hagerstown, where he remained for a few days. Harrisburg was now made the immediate objective point of Lee's campaign.

This course was no doubt dictated by two considerations: First, that city was the capital of Pennsylvania and its occupation was important for its moral effect, and it was doubtless expected to there levy a large contribution of money and supplies; and, second, its occupation was still more important because of its location on the Pennsylvania and Northern Central Railroads. Imboden's cavalry had already destroyed the Baltimore and Ohio, and, if the Pennsylvania Railroad could be cut, the only means of communication between Washington and the West would be by a route much farther north—possibly the New York Central.

Although not so expressly stated in the extant orders or official reports, the final plan appears to have been for Ewell to move two of his divisions (Rodes and Johnson) directly upon this city by way of the Cumberland Valley and to send a third division (Early's) by Gettysburg, York and Columbia to Lancaster, to take Harrisburg in the rear. In his official report Gen. Lee says: "Orders were * * * issued to move upon Harrisburg. The expedition of Gen. Early to York was designed in part to prepare for this undertaking by breaking the railroad between Baltimore and Harrisburg, and seizing the bridge over the Susquehanna at Wrightsville. Gen. Early succeeded in the first object, destroying a number of bridges above and below York, but, on the approach of the troops sent by him to Wrightsville, a body of militia stationed at that place fled across the river and burned the bridge. General Early then marched to rejoin his corps." The seizure of the bridge of course meant the use of it and the crossing of the river into Lancaster County.

General Early in his report says:

"I regretted very much the failure to secure this bridge, as, finding the defenceless condition of the country generally, and the little obstacle likely to be afforded by the militia to our progress, I had determined, if I could get possession of the Columbia Bridge, to cross my division over the Susquehanna, and cut the Pennsylvania Railroad, march upon Lancaster, lay that town under contribution, and then attack Harrisburg in the rear while it should be attacked in front by the rest of the corps, relying, in the worst contingency that might happen, upon being able to mount my division from the immense number of horses that had been run across the river, and then move to the west, destroying the railroads and canals, and returning back again to a place of safety. This project, however, was entirely thwarted by the destruction of the bridge, as the river was otherwise impassable, being very wide and deep at this point. I

therefore ordered General Gordon to move his command back to York next day, and returned to that place myself that night."

Gen. Ewell says he received the order to take Harrisburg on June 21st. Gen. Lee appears to have repeated this order the next day, for in his dispatch of June 22nd to Ewell he says: "If Harrisburg comes within your means, capture it."

On June 22nd, the advance on Harrisburg began, Rodes' division leading with Jenkins cavalry in advance, and Johnson's division following. Gen. Rodes reports: "On the 22nd the division resumed its march and on that day penetrated into the enemy's country. Iverson's brigade was the first to touch the soil of Pennsylvania." On June 24th Chambersburg was reached and on the 27th Carlisle. Gen. Rodes says in his report: "On our arrival at Carlisle, Jenkins' cavalry advanced toward Harrisburg, and on the 29th made a thorough reconnaissance of the defences of that place, with a view to our advance upon it, a step which every man in the division contemplated with eagerness and which was to have been made on the 30th, but on the 30th, having received orders to move toward the balance of the army, then supposed to be at or near Cashtown, we set out for that place."

Gen. Ewell in his report says: "From Carlisle I sent forward my engineer Captain Richardson, with General Jenkins' cavalry, to reconnoitre the defences of Harrisburg and was starting on the 29th for that place when ordered by the general commanding to join the main body of the army at Cashtown, near Gettysburg."

So near was Harrisburg to capture. For it is not to be supposed that the inexperienced troops,—of however good material,—that occupied the entrenchments across the river, could have long withstood the assault of the veteran divisions of Rodes and Johnson.

As I have said, the march from Hagerstown to Harrisburg was begun on June 22nd. The distance is approximately 75 miles, and could easily have been covered by infantry with their trains in five days. The delay was probably due in part to the occupation of the troops in collecting supplies from the country they traversed and in part to the desire of Gen. Lee to close up his lengthened column by bringing up the corps of Longstreet and Hill. But if celerity had been used, there seems to be no reason why Harrisburg should not have fallen before the necessity of concentrating the Confederate forces in Adams County became apparent.

The nearest approach of the Confederates to Harrisburg in any

considerable body was at Oyster's Point, where a skirmish took place on June 29th, apparently without loss to either side.

Upon the retirement of the Confederates the militia followed as rapidly as possible, and on June 30th had a skirmish at Sporting Hill, and on July 1st the affair at Carlisle with Stuart's cavalry,—which I shall not stop to describe,—took place.

Alarm Along the Pennsylvania Border.

With the first rumors of a Confederate raid towards Maryland and Pennsylvania, the people along the border became anxious, and with Milroy's disaster at Winchester and the mad race of his wagon train for safety behind the Susquehanna, anxiety grew to alarm, particularly among the farmers, who well knew that raid or invasion meant the loss of their property. Early in June, the movement began of horses and cattle and, to a small extent, of wagons containing other possessions. All day long country roads and streets of towns were thronged by moving masses streaming towards the Susquehanna at Columbia and Harrisburg. As the advance of the enemy grew nearer, banks sent their money, evidences of indebtedness and books and papers to Philadelphia, and merchants shipped their more valuable and easily transported goods or concealed them in places of safety. Business was almost entirely suspended and citizens sought the streets and public places for the latest news. Such was the condition not only along the middle border of Pennsylvania, but the alarm extended to Philadelphia, nearly a hundred miles from the nearest approach of the Confederate troops and a point which probably would not have been reached by them, even if Lee had won the battle of Gettysburg. Business was seriously interfered with, wild rumors were afloat, excited meetings were held and prominent citizens demanded that Gen. McClellan should be recalled to command and that 50 pieces of artillery and 20,000 veteran troops should be sent for the defence of the city.

But with all this alarm and disturbance it is creditable to the people of the North that there was no general panic. Stocks sold during Lee's invasion at their normal prices, and on July 1st the sale of government bonds amounted to \$1,700,000.

Impressment of Supplies.

The alarm of farmers and others for the safety of their property was well founded. One of the purposes of the invasion of Penn-

sylvania was the procuring of supplies, and this purpose was rigorously carried into effect. Jenkins, after an absence of a few days in the direction of Chambersburg, returned to Rodes at Williamsport loaded down with booty. All serviceable horses, cattle, sheep, hats, shoes, flour and other provisions within the reach of foraging parties during the whole march of the army were taken, and in some instances mills were kept grinding night and day under guards of soldiers. The extent of these captures can be imagined from the fact that General Ewell states that nearly 3,000 cattle were captured by his command. Requisitions were made upon all towns of any considerable size along the line of march, Greeneastle, Chambersburg, Shippensburg, Carlisle, Gettysburg and York. A few instances may not be uninteresting. Several requisitions were made upon Chambersburg; on June 24 for the following articles:

“5,000 suits of clothing, including hats, boots, and shoes; 100 good saddles; 100 good bridles; 5,000 bushels of grain (corn or oats); 10,000 lbs. sole leather; 10,000 lbs. horseshoes; 400 lbs. horse-shoe nails.

“6,000 lbs. lead; 10,000 lbs. harness leather; 50 boxes of tin; 1,000 curry combs and brushes; 2,000 lbs. picket rope; 400 pistols; all the caps and powder in town; also, all the neat’s foot oil.

“50,000 lbs. bread; 100 sacks salt; 30 barrels molasses; 500 barrels flour; 25 barrels vinegar; 25 barrels beans; 25 barrels dried fruit; 25 barrels sauerkraut; 25 barrels potatoes; 11,000 lbs coffee; 10,000 lbs. sugar; 100,000 lbs. hard bread.”

These requisitions were by no means filled, but the town was so stripped of provisions that it was found necessary to make a personal appeal to Gen. Lee for the distribution of flour among the poor.

At Gettysburg, on June 26th, Early demanded 60 barrels of flour, 7,000 pounds pork or bacon, 1,200 pounds sugar, 100 pounds coffee, 1,000 pounds salt, 40 bushels onions, 1,000 pairs shoes, 500 hats, or \$10,000 in money. In his report he says: “The authorities of Gettysburg declared their inability to furnish any supplies, and a search of the stores resulted in securing only a very small quantity of commissary supplies * * * As it was late when I reached the place and having to move upon York early next day, I had no opportunity of compelling a compliance with my demands in this town, or ascertaining its resources, which I think however were limited.” Four days later, on June 30th, Pettigrew’s brigade, of Hill’s Corps, was sent to Gettysburg with a train of wagons, to

procure supplies. They had actually reached the borough limits, when the approach of Buford's cavalry was observed and a hasty retreat was made. Gettysburg was thus twice saved from spoliation: first, by its apparent poverty and want of time for a thorough search, and, second, by the arrival of Union soldiers.

York fared worse. On June 28th, Early made a requisition upon the authorities for 2,000 pairs of shoes, 1,000 hats, 1,000 pairs socks, \$100,000 in money and three days' rations of all kinds. The hats, socks, rations and between 1,200 and 1,500 pairs of shoes were furnished and \$28,600 in money was paid.

If Harrisburg had been captured, it is apparent that it could not have escaped a very heavy contribution. The eagerness of Rodes' troops for an advance upon the city may not have been entirely unrelated to the hope of rich spoil.

In the face of these proceedings, it is amusing to read in contemporaneous dispatches the indignation of Confederate authorities over the atrocious conduct of Federal cavalry in "stealing" slaves, horses, mules and cattle in the neighborhood of Richmond, left almost defenceless by the absence of Lee's army. There was a difference not only in standpoint but in method. The Federal troops took what they wanted, either for their use or to cripple the resources of the Confederacy, leaving the owner to obtain payment in good money from the government, in case he could prove his loyalty, while General Lee paid for what he took from private persons,—in Confederate money. In his dispatch of June 23rd to President Davis, after stating that he has already collected large supplies north as well as south of the Potomac and hopes to get enough for the subsistence of his men, and that he is paying 75 cents per bushel for salt, \$6.50 per barrel for flour and \$5.00 per hundred, gross, for beef, he says with great naivete: "We use Confederate money for all payments. I shall continue to purchase all supplies that are furnished me while north of the Potomac, impressing only when necessary." About that time Confederate money was worth, in Richmond, about five cents on the dollar in gold, so that he was "purchasing,"—to use his euphemism,—salt at less than four cents per bushel, flour at 32½ cents per barrel and beef cattle at ¼ cent per pound in gold. I have never heard or read that any citizen of Pennsylvania voluntarily "furnished" these or any other supplies to Lee's army upon these terms. Impressment, either by force or by fear, was the only means by which

they were obtained. As to supplies obtained on requisition from towns, I have never seen it stated that any pretence of payment was made. They were demanded upon threat of general search and confiscation of all supplies found. The fate of the Pennsylvania farmer despoiled of his horses, his cattle and his grain was not better than that of the Virginia farmer similarly despoiled; his property was taken and he received nothing of value in return for it. In either case it was war, and war in an enemy's country always means spoliation and destruction.

It is fair to say that Gen. Lee issued strict orders forbidding the taking of private property except through authorized channels, and that the march of his army was accompanied by much less pillage and destruction than usually attends the march of an army through hostile territory.

Advance of the Armies and Collision at Gettysburg.

A few words now as to the forward movements of the two armies which brought them face to face and finally into collision at Gettysburg.

The screen of mountains and cavalry so masked Lee's movements as he marched northward in the Shenandoah Valley that for many days the Federal authorities were in ignorance of them. Hampered by the express command to keep his army between the enemy and Washington, Hooker was detained in Virginia until all of Lee's infantry were in Maryland and Pennsylvania. On June 25th, Hooker began to cross the Potomac and on the 28th his seven infantry corps were concentrated in the neighborhood of Frederick, Md. At this juncture Hooker, whose relations with his General-in-Chief, Halleck, were seriously strained, was, at his own request, relieved from the command of the Army of the Potomac, and Gen. Meade, a Pennsylvanian, a modest gentleman and a highly educated and thoroughly tried soldier, was appointed to succeed him. At this time, Lee was with Longstreet's corps at Chambersburg; Hill's corps was at Fayetteville and, of Early's corps, two divisions were at Carlisle and one at York; and that these positions were occupied by Confederate troops was in a general way, although not in detail, known at the time to the Union commander. To meet these dispositions of the enemy Meade spread his seven corps out in fan shape and advanced, with the result that on the night of June 30th they were thus disposed: 1st, at Marsh Creek,

five or six miles south of Gettysburg; the 11th at Emmitsburg, eleven miles from Gettysburg, and the 3rd near Emmitsburg, these three corps being under the command of Gen. Reynolds; the 2nd at Uniontown, the 5th at Union Mills, the 12th at Littlestown, and the 6th at Manchester, 34 miles southeast of Gettysburg.

Stuart's cavalry, having attempted a brief raid, became separated from Lee's infantry by the interposition of the Union infantry corps and, after an absence of over a week, returned to the main army only on the afternoon of July 2nd. Deprived of this means of information, Gen. Lee was in ignorance of the forward movement of the Union army and, during his entire advance upon Harrisburg, assumed that it was still in Virginia, until on the night of June 28th he was informed by a scout of its concentration near Frederick, Md. An order was immediately given for concentration of the Confederate infantry east of the mountains at Cashtown or Gettysburg, as circumstances might determine, with the result that on the night of June 30th the Confederate forces were disposed as follows: Two divisions of Ewell's corps at Heidlersburg, about 10 miles northeast of Gettysburg; two divisions of Hill's corps east of the mountains on the Chambersburg pike, with the advance within three miles of Gettysburg, and the remainder of the infantry between Chambersburg and the mountains.

Then followed, on July 1st, the collision between Buford's cavalry and Hill's infantry which resulted in the battle of Gettysburg. Neither General sought a battle at Gettysburg, nor an offensive battle at all. General Meade, having manœuvred Gen. Lee away from the Susquehanna, felt that Washington and Baltimore were now protected, and, with his base of supplies at Westminster, selected a line upon Pipe Creek in Maryland, about 15 miles south of Gettysburg, to which, after having felt the enemy, he could withdraw his corps, and, if attacked, fight a defensive battle in an advantageous position. Gen. Lee, unexpectedly finding the enemy so near him, concluded that he could not withdraw behind the mountains without endangering his communications, and, concentrating his army in the neighborhood of Cashtown, hoped to be attacked and fight a defensive battle in that vicinity. But on July 1st the collision between Buford's cavalry and Hill's infantry occurred at Gettysburg. Without intention on the part of either commander the battle was on, and was destined to be fought out to a finish.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to describe the Battle of Gettysburg. Many narratives of it,—of varying degrees of excellence,—have been published and many of you have heard upon the field the descriptions given by the guides,—always vivid and in the main accurate. Omitting description of the battle and discussion of the numerous warmly contested questions which have arisen out of it, I add a few remarks upon its severity and importance.

Severity and Importance of Battle of Gettysburg.

The Battle of Gettysburg is often spoken of as the greatest battle of the war. It was so in two respects: magnitude of losses on both sides and importance of results.

Antietam, considering its duration, was the bloodiest battle of the war, but in the battle of Gettysburg, lasting three days, the aggregate losses in killed, wounded and missing were much greater. Those of the Union army were reported as 23,001, and those of the Confederates 20,448. Later investigations have induced some to estimate the losses of the latter as at least equal to those of the Union army and the total of the two armies as upwards of 45,000, or about 30 per cent. of the entire number of men engaged. Never was a field more gallantly contested in any battle of the Civil War, and this is attested by the regimental losses. The highest regimental loss in the Union army was that of the 24th Michigan, 363, followed by those of the 151st Pennsylvania, 337 and 149th Pennsylvania, 336. But, by the test of percentage, the 1st Minnesota Regiment stands at the head, having lost 47 killed and 168 wounded, and none missing, out of a total of 262 taken into action, or 82 per cent.; in its single gallant charge against Wilcox's Confederate brigade on July 2d, of which Gen. Hancock said: "There is no more gallant deed recorded in history;" and other losses were added on the following day. The 141st Pennsylvania follows next with a total loss of 149 out of 198 taken into action, or 75.7 per cent. These, according to Col. Fox, were the highest percentages of regimental loss in a single battle sustained on the Union side during the war. Without taking up time with details, I may state that in this battle at least 19 Union regiments sustained loss of 50 per cent., or more, of the entire number of men taken by them into action, and in most of these commands the number of missing was relatively small.

Confederate percentages are very difficult to ascertain, as even in the extant regimental reports the number of men taken into ac-

tion is seldom stated, in consequence of an order of Gen. Lee suggesting the impropriety of such statements as giving information of the Confederate strength to the enemy. But the percentages of loss in a large number of regiments must have been very high. One instance of heavy regimental loss is often mentioned. The 26th North Carolina took into the first day's fight 820 men and lost 604 in killed, wounded and missing, or 73.6 per cent. with additional losses on the third day. The loss on the first day was inflicted by Cooper's Pennsylvania Battery and the 151st Pennsylvania regiment, commanded by our late fellow townsman, Col. George F. McFarland. Speaking of the engagement, in which these North Carolina and Pennsylvania troops took part, the official report of the Confederate brigade says: "The fighting was terrible, our men advancing, the enemy stubbornly resisting, until the two lines were pouring volleys into each other at a distance of not more than 20 paces." The Pennsylvania regiment stood its ground until support had left both of its flanks, when it retired, losing in the day's fight 337 out of 465 men taken into action, or 72.4 per cent.

Many of you have stood near the "bloody angle", and heard vividly described by the guides the famous movement which has come down in history as "Pickett's charge," although participated in by other troops. It was a gallant charge, made in full view of both armies and could have been made only by brave and well disciplined troops, and its repulse destroyed the last Confederate hope of victory at Gettysburg. It therefore has its historic value as well as a dramatic interest which appeals strongly to the imagination of the average person. But the great prominence given to it and the stress laid upon the losses suffered by this body of Virginia troops have occasioned no little heartburning among the troops of other Confederate commands who fought just as bravely and suffered more severely, and their protest is not entirely without merit.

Pickett is said to have taken into the charge about 4,900 men and he is reported to have lost in killed, wounded and missing, excluding losses in his artillery, 2,863, or 58.4 per cent. No other division lost as heavily, but a comparison of regimental losses is favorable to other commands. The average number of killed, wounded and missing per regiment in Pickett's division was 191 and this was exceeded, in killed and wounded alone, in ten regiments of other commands. Rejecting the missing, for want of insufficient data in other commands, Pickett's highest regimental loss in killed and

wounded was 170, and the average 91, while the former was exceeded in 10 and the latter in 53 regiments of other commands.

I do not seek to detract from the credit which properly belongs to Pickett's gallant soldiers, but it is only fair that the dramatic interest which attaches to their charge should not obscure the gallantry of their comrades in arms.

Over against this brilliant but unfortunate movement, I may place, as a conspicuous instance of steadfast courage on the part of the Union troops, the gallant stand made by Roy Stone's Pennsylvania Bucktail Brigade on the McPherson farm. Placed at an angle of the Union line, repeatedly attacked on both sides by superior numbers, they bravely held their position for four long and murderous hours, until left without support on either side and outflanked on both, they fell back by command, turning repeatedly, as they retreated, to face the advancing enemy; and, although under fire at Chancellorsville, Gettysburg was the first battle in which they were actively engaged. Their loss in killed and wounded and missing was 64.8 per cent. Their commanding officer said in his official report:

"No language can do justice to the conduct of my officers and men on the bloody 'first day'; to the coolness with which they watched and waited, under a fierce storm of shot and shell, the approach of the enemy's overwhelming masses; their ready obedience to orders and the prompt and perfect execution, under fire, of all the tactics of the battlefield; to the fierceness of their repeated attacks, or to the desperate tenacity of their resistance.

"They fought as if each man felt that upon his own arm hung the fate of the day and the nation. Nearly two-thirds of my command fell on the field. Every field officer save one was wounded and disabled. * * * Not one of them left the field until completely disabled."

Speaking of this brigade as it went into position, Gen. Doubleday said:

"It was a hot place for troops; for the whole position was alive with bursting shells, but the men went forward in fine spirits and, under the impression that the place was to be held at all hazards, they cried out, '*We have come to stay!*' The battle afterward became so severe that the greater portion did stay, laying down their lives there for the cause they loved so well."

On the afternoon of the first day's battle it was said in my hearing by a wounded captain of the 14th Brooklyn regiment: "I have never

seen men fight as the Pennsylvanians are fighting to-day." But it was not the Pennsylvanians alone. The same spirit of stern determination and steadfast courage was on all the men composing the Union army on that day, as well as on the succeeding days, and the selection of one command for special comment by way of illustration does not mean depreciation of any. For "on that field," "many died and there was much glory."

Comparing percentages of regimental losses in the battle of Gettysburg with losses in European armies, the Light Brigade at Balaklava lost 247 men out of 673 who went into the famous charge, or 36.7 per cent. Does not "their glory fade" when compared with the 82 per cent. loss of the gallant little First Minnesota?

The heaviest loss in the German army in the Franco-Prussian War was in the 3rd Westphalian regiment at Mars La Tour, 49.4 per cent., and the Garde Schutzen Battalion lost at Metz 46.1 per cent. I have already said that in 19 Union regiments in the battle of Gettysburg the loss equalled or exceeded 50 per cent. and, if data for calculation were available, I have no doubt an equal number of Confederate regiments suffering similar losses could be found. Such was the fierceness of the struggle and such the valor of the American soldier in that "greatest battle of the Civil War."

Gettysburg as a Decisive Battle.

Gettysburg is often reckoned one of the decisive battles of the war, and of the world. It was not so in the sense of Waterloo or Sadowa, speedily ending the war and compelling a peace dictated by the victor in the battle, but rather in the sense of Saratoga, so influencing the course of events, military and political, as to render the final event of the struggle reasonably certain, although the struggle went on. But, what if Lee had won at Gettysburg? What, for example, if Pickett's charge had been successful; if the left center of the Union line had been pierced and Meade's forces had been driven from the heights of Gettysburg? It is not to be supposed that the Army of the Potomac would have fled in rout and panic. Their steadfast courage and discipline on this and prior fields permits no such conjecture. They would have fallen back with loss of men and material. Meade's base of supplies was then at Westminster, 26 miles south of Gettysburg on the Baltimore pike, and he doubtless would have taken position along the Pipe Creek line or near it, thus interposing his army between the enemy

and Washington and Baltimore. Washington was strongly fortified and could for the present be defended by a small number of troops within its entrenchments, and Baltimore was reasonably safe. Philadelphia was more than 100 miles away and could be reached only after a long march through a hostile country. Lee had lost nearly one-third of his army in battle and he could expect no substantial reinforcement; his ammunition was low and he was incumbered with a large number of wounded and prisoners. His line of communication with his base of supplies at Richmond was a long, difficult and dangerous one, by way of the Cumberland and Shenandoah Valleys. The Union cavalry was intact and equal in numbers, enterprise and efficiency with the opposing cavalry. In his official report Gen. Lee speaks of the interference of local and other troops with his collection of supplies and, even if his army could have lived off of the country, his supplies of ammunition must have come from Richmond. Moreover, the Union army would have been speedily reinforced. Already troops were coming North from the coast, and others could have been obtained there and elsewhere. Vicksburg fell on July 4th and an army corps or more of Grant's army, thus released from present activity in the west, could have been brought east, just as the 11th and 12th corps were in the fall of 1863 sent to Chattanooga and as Longstreet's corps was sent to reinforce ~~Pennsylvania~~^{Mass.}. The militia were gathering in force and these could have been incorporated in the brigades and divisions of the Army of the Potomac,—as was in fact proposed by Gen. W. F. Smith just prior to the escape of Lee's army into Virginia,—and would there doubtless have rendered efficient service.

In these circumstances, encumbered as he was, with the heavy losses he had suffered, with ammunition too low, according to his own statement, to hazard another offensive battle, and in the presence of an army increasing in number and, although defeated, not dismayed, it is difficult to imagine that Gen. Lee could have undertaken any operations of serious magnitude very far to the east of the mountains or could long have remained north of the Potomac.

But what of the moral effect of a Confederate victory? Would foreign nations,—and particularly France and Great Britain,—have intervened to make serious trouble?

Shortly after the battle of Gettysburg, the enforcement of the draft met with serious resistance,—particularly in New York City, where a riot broke out requiring the return of the New York militia

and the subsequent transfer of veteran troops from the Army of the Potomac. What would have been the situation if the Union arms had met with defeat? And what would have been the effect of such reverse upon the general public sentiment in the North as to the continuance of the war? Would the great mass of the people, disheartened by three successive defeats of their great eastern army and the presence of the enemy in a great Northern State, have gone over to what Gen. Lee denominated "the rising peace party of the North" and demanded a cessation of hostilities, even though it meant dismemberment of the Union? or would they not, as after Bull Run, have drawn from disaster increased patriotic fervor and renewed determination for its salvation? These are questions which cannot certainly be answered. But the event of the battle, as it did happen, destroyed the last reasonable hope of the ultimate triumph of the Southern Confederacy. Thereafter the question was one of endurance, of how long the North would continue to pour out its men and its treasure and how long the South could endure the wearing away of its resources in men and material. Hence Gettysburg is fitly numbered among the decisive battles of the war, and of the world.

A half century has passed since those eventful days. Eyes see more clearly now than they did then, and those who sought to destroy the Union are now happy in its preservation. It is expected that next month 40,000 veteran soldiers,—blue and gray,—will meet on that great battlefield, not in hostile array, pouring volleys into each other at 20 paces, as did the men of North Carolina and Pennsylvania fifty years ago, but in comradeship and friendly handclasp,—as becomes brave men, each proud of the valor of his former foe,—and all now loyal citizens of a united, prosperous and happy country.



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